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CONTENTS.

NOTES OF THE WEEK ... 269

LEADING ARTICLES:—

Between the Somme and
the Oise ... 272
An Oxford Statesman ... 272
Coal Tar ... 273
Chatterton ... 274
Our Operatic Standard 276

CORRESPONDENCE:—

A Hundred Years of War 276
The House of Merlins ... 277
Quo Vadis? ... 277
The Marconi Imbroglio: 278

Banking Reform ... 278
To Save Fuel ... 279
The American Eagle on
St. Paul's ... 279

REVIEWS:—

Russia in Disruption ... 280
Life in the Merchant
Service ... 281
Diaz the Despot ... 282

FINANCE:—

Motor Notes ... 284
The City ... 286

WE call a nettle but a nettle, and
The faults of fools but folly."

CORIOLANUS

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The great offensive on the Western Front began on Thursday in last week, and has been continued since with desperate intensity by the enemy. It does not, so far, supply any tactical surprises. The Germans have massed their men and pushed forward one division after another regardless of the sacrifice of life, as they did before Verdun. The attack was directed against 50 miles of the British Front from the Scarpe to the Oise, and the Germans were already credited by Sunday with flinging one-third of their Western forces against this sector. They have made considerable advances by sheer weight of the men, and on the Southern side of the line they broke through in the early stages to a serious extent, but in no case have they created anything like a rout or a panic. Our artillery, machine guns, and aeroplanes have taken a very heavy toll of their masses. Our troops have retired methodically to new positions, and, facing odds of 8 or 10 to 1, their resistance has been stubborn and superb. When isolated with little hope of extricating themselves, they have stood firm instead of retiring and have raked the enemy to the last shot.

On the northern part of the line little was gained in the first part of the fight. Henin Hill, south-east of Arras, was defended against column after column of advancing Germans. Round Lagnicourt and Demi-court the Highlanders fought with immense heroism, and, when the right flank was exposed, the Seaforths held their position and covered the withdrawal—even against two field-guns fired at them at point blank range. On Friday the enemy made no progress in this region, and the retirement in good order was mainly due to the serious breach made in the south part of the line.

Here particularly in the neighbourhood of St. Quentin, our troops were forced back several miles by overwhelming numbers, but the enemy's plans were retarded by the gallantry and resource of the defence. When St. Quentin was occupied by the Germans it was heavily gassed during the night. In the open country south of the town redouts were held for many hours, and in some cases till after night-fall. The old Vaubaa keep at La Fère and the fort at Vendeuil were held long after they were entirely surrounded. On the middle of the line at Epehy two of our field batteries fired steadily at the enemy with open sights at 400 yards for four hours, and at Vaucelette Farm near by a party of Leicester's held out until they were all killed. These are but a few incidents out of many which show the severity and stubbornness of the defence.

By Monday the Germans had advanced all along the line, the greatest depth of ground gained being some fifteen miles in the south. Here they were on the devastated battlefield of the Somme. In the morning from the Somme to within a few miles of Arras their continuous attacks were "beaten off with complete success," but fresh forces brought up secured Bapaume, and the Germans now hold that place, Combles and Peronne. South of these the Somme has been passed after a series of severe struggles. Further south, where the advance is greatest, Nesle 3½ miles west of the Somme, and Guiscard 14½ miles west of La Fère, have been taken. The French have intervened in this region, and are holding up the enemy in the neighbourhood of Noyon, which had been evacuated when we went to press. Generally, it may be said, that our line has retreated indeed, but has fallen back everywhere full of fight. We do not know the extent of the German losses.

The German report of Sunday, which claims "the mastery in the air," is not supported by facts. Sir Douglas Haig reported on Saturday that our airmen had destroyed fifty German machines and lost only eight, and on Sunday that twenty-nine machines were brought down and twenty-five driven down out of control, nine of our machines being missing. On the night before the important railway works of Konz were bombed, and Mannheim was again attacked, the resultant fire being visible 35 miles away. In both cases all our machines returned, and at Mannheim after a severe combat seven of the enemy's planes were driven down. On Monday half-a-ton of bombs was dropped on Cologne, and at the front our men brought down 45 machines, drove down 22, and lost ten.

There is something particularly repulsive in the German accounts of the Kaiser and his egregious heir lurking in luxurious safety far behind the lines, and gloating over the catalogue of slaughter. A king should either lead his troops in person, or keep away from the business altogether, like King George. But the Hohenzollerns are incorrigible *poseurs*: the tradition of Frederick the Great must be kept up: and so the Kaiser is described and photographed with his hand on the eagle a-top of his spotless helmet. He has even had the incredible fatuity to claim the credit of the last plan of campaign. "I planned it with Hindenburg, Ludendorf, and God Almighty." The last British king

to take part in a battle was George II., who, dismounting from his horse, led the British and Hanoverian infantry at Dettingen in 1743, for which conduct much was forgiven him. George IV. had told people so often that he was at Waterloo that, according to the Duke of Wellington, he came at last to believe it.

The Dutch press and the Government of the Netherlands are making the welkin ring with their protestations against the injustice and illegality of the requisition of their ships by the United States and Britain. The hollowness of all this clatter is proved by the fact that there is a boom in Dutch shipping shares since the decision of the Entente was made known. The owners of the Dutch ships know well that they will be handsomely paid, and that their vessels will earn more in our hands than in their own. Moreover, there is the guarantee that all ships destroyed by the Germans will be replaced by the Americans and ourselves after the war. It is really a splendid bargain for the Dutch shipowners. The Netherlands Oversea Trust has loyally kept its word to us throughout the war. But the Dutch Court and Government have been persistently pro-German.

Anyone who wishes to realise the extent to which the war has excited and deranged the mental balance of even shrewd business-men should read the account of Lord Leverhulme's interview with the *Daily Chronicle*. Lord Leverhulme has apparently made up his mind to the continuance of the war for three or five years, if necessary, longer. As for the debt, which he puts at eight thousand millions, what is that in proportion to our wealth? The debt at the close of the Napoleonic War was nine hundred millions: but, says Lord Leverhulme, "we are hundred times richer than we were in 1815," so that arithmetically we ought to be able to shoulder a debt of ninety thousand millions.

Britain is not a hundred times richer than it was a century ago, though, judging by the income assessable to income-tax we may be thirty times richer. When Pitt started the income-tax in 1798 the amount assessable was estimated at £40,000,000. To-day we believe it is £1,200,000,000, or thirty times as much. But to infer from those figures that the country can shoulder a debt thirty times as big (which would mean £27,000,000,000) is to take a very superficial view of the matter. The nominal or apparent income of the nation has risen prodigiously, but the standard and cost of living have risen proportionately, and therefore the purchasing power of money has declined. It would be an interesting problem for a Ricardo to ascertain how much the purchasing power of money has fallen in the last hundred years. Making allowance for the fall in the value of money and the higher standard of living obligatory, we believe that the nation may be said to be between ten and fifteen times richer than it was. Pitt's income-tax never rose above 10 per cent.

The most pathetic of the many delusions generated by this war is the notion that we are fighting to end war for ever. That is the conviction which inspires the League of Nations people, else their speeches and books were mere words. This dream discovers an astounding ignorance of the history of past wars and treaties of peace; and though history never does repeat itself exactly, yet there is a chain of causation in human affairs which produces, if not identity, a broad similarity of results. There never yet was a great war, in modern times, that ended satisfactory, or that settled any of the issues for more than a few years.

We went to war with Louis XIV., about the succession to the French and Spanish thrones, and after some nine years of fighting we recognized Philip, against whose claim we had gone to war, and thirty years after the Peace of Utrecht we were again at war with France. At the end of the eighteenth century we again began a big war against France to suppress Jacobinism and restore Legitimacy. It lasted twenty years, and was closed by what is called one of the decisive battles

of the world. But did Waterloo settle anything? We restored the legitimate Bourbon, and fifteen years afterwards the French deposed Charles X. and put Louis Philippe in his place, who eighteen years later was deposed by the Jacobins, who were crushed by Napoleon, who was crushed by the Prussians. We united Belgium and Holland, and fifteen years later separated them. Waterloo settled nothing.

In 1854 Britain, together with France, went into the Crimean War to break Russia. The most important clause of the Treaty of Paris (1856) was that which excluded Russian ships of war from the Black Sea. Fifteen years later, when France and Germany were at war, the Russian Government tore up the Black Sea Clause, and flung its fragments into Gladstone's face. He would be a bold man who should say that the Transvaal War in 1899 has settled the African question. The present war, owing to our inability to hold Russia together, has opened up vast questions in Eastern Europe and in the far East, between Teutons and Slavs and Turks and Russians, between the white and yellow races, which portend a century of struggle. The scattering of a little dust of pacificism by a few professors, idealists, and anarchists, will not compose these mighty quarrels.

What are called the Great European Powers, that is, Britain, France, Germany, Austria, and Italy, are not likely to go to war again for thirty or forty years after peace. The poignant disgust at the slaughter of men and the waste of money and property, the mere exhaustion, will suffice to keep the peace in Western Europe for a long time. It is in the Near and Far East, amongst the semi-civilised peoples, that wars will break out, and the question is whether the Western Powers will be able to keep aloof. It is probable that as soon as the danger of war is removed, the German peoples will remodel their central and local governments on more or less democratic lines, for the German armies, well disciplined as they are, have learned a great deal about "modernism" in the war, if only from their prisoners. Suppose that in fifty years, there are nothing but Republics. Will the new Republics be more or less bellicose than their autocratic predecessors? Judging by classical and mediæval history, they will be more quarrelsome.

The Prime Minister told the Miners' Representatives a week ago that they must obey the law: that if one trade claimed privilege or exemption, there were waiting a dozen others who would make a similar demand: that it was not for one section of the community to choose whether they would or would not obey laws made by Parliament; and that it was precisely the failure to obey the law that had brought Russian democracy under the heel of Germany. We would have given a king's ransom to see the faces of the Miners' delegates, when these truisms (which from long disuse have become paradoxes), were addressed to them. For one section of the community to say it will not obey a law, because it does not like it, is anarchy, said Mr. Lloyd George.

Mr. Lloyd George is getting on with his political education at the expense of the Empire; but the bill is a confoundedly stiff one. For the last twelve years, ever since the Trades Disputes Act, 1906, the working-man has been taught, by those who sought his votes, that he is above the law: that if he doesn't like a law, he has only got to say so, and it will be repealed or amended to suit his fancy. Most of the laws passed with regard to Labour between 1906 and 1914 were thrown into the form of an option, that is, their mandatory clauses were nearly always subject to arbitration or reference to some Council or board of conciliation. Even since the war, the working-classes have been coaxed and cajoled into every step necessary for the defence of the country. It really is an astounding position. If the working-classes don't want to fight for the independence of their country, why then, in God's name let us make the best terms we can.

Mr. Lloyd George held up the Russian Bolsheviks as a terrible warning to the miners of the results of anarchy. Here again is another instance of the Prime Minister's advancement in learning. A year ago he hurried down to the House of Commons to send congratulations and fraternal greetings to Kerensky and the Soviet, not only because they had deposed their lawful sovereign, but because glorious democracy would prosecute the war more vigorously than autocracy. He compared Kerensky to St. Just, "that great revolutionary character." What did he know about St. Just, who was the most pitiful and the most pitiless of the murderers who surrounded Robespierre? To-day Mr. Lloyd George holds up the Soviet and Kerensky's successors as an object lesson to organized Labour. The Prime Minister's ignorance of the history of all revolutions, and his failure to gauge the political situation in Russia have probably cost us Eastern Europe, and may prolong the war for two years.

There is a tiresome proverb about shutting the stable-door after the horse has escaped. After the working-classes have been taught (by both parties) that contracts are made to be broken and laws to be disobeyed, is it not a little late in the day to fall back upon the despised Tory formula about law and order? It looks as if the Engineers were about to give Britain away, as the Soviet, the Council of Soldiers' and Workmens' Delegates, gave Russia away to the enemy. For the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (without, it is true, their leaders) have passed a resolution of defiance, declaring that they will not obey the "combing out" order of the Government. Will the Prime Minister enforce the words which he used to the Miners against the Engineers with armed force? If not, we are indeed in the presence of anarchy, and consequently of defeat.

We are told by some papers, as a reassurance, that the Engineers' resolution was passed before the very serious military events on the Western front; and that now the Engineers will cancel their resolution. What is that patriotism worth which is only extracted by the pressure of defeat? The minds of the proletariat have been demoralized by the sycophancy of vote-catching statesmen, who have preached copiously to the hand-workers of their rights, but never of their duties. The terrible efficiency of the Germans is due to their discipline, their habit of subordination. The chief lesson which is taught to German boys in their schools is that they must obey, and sacrifice themselves for their country. Does any national teacher in any County Council School ever mention obedience and self-sacrifice?

For a tale of meanness, stupidity, and official dishonesty, commend us to Lord Inchcape's history of the Chepstow Shipbuilding Yard. Towards the end of 1915, when things were looking pretty black, a few patriotic shipbuilders and capitalists put up £600,000 to start an up-to-date shipbuilding yard at Chepstow on the Wye. They formed a company and bought land with foreshore rights, and buildings, and plant, secured a railway siding, erected workmen's dwellings on the plan of a Garden City, planned the yard and all its accessories, settled with the owners of fishing rights, and by now, had the Government not interfered, four ships would have been ready, and two ships of 10,000 tons carrying capacity would have been on the water, with two more to follow this summer, and two more by the end of the year, 60,000 tons in all, built by private capital and foresight.

Lord Inchcape and his friends made the Chepstow Shipyards, and the Government saw that it was good. The Government thereupon evicted Lord Inchcape and his friends and seized the Chepstow shipyard, without a word of acknowledgement and without a penny of payment. The £600,000 subscribed by the Company are now dead money, yielding no interest, and not a ship has been built, nor a stroke of work done in the

yard since Lord Inchcape and Co. were unceremoniously turned adrift. The real and growing danger about all this State control of industry, is that the most reckless blunders are made, and nobody is responsible. Probably we shall never know who was responsible for the Loch Doon aerodrome, with its loss of millions, because one official tosses on the blame to another. Shall we be haled before Sir John Dickinson if we borrow a crude, but vigorous phrase, and say, "O, State, thou art a bestial thing?"

There are manifold and obvious dangers in "tempys" whether they be officers, domestic servants, or literary gents. The sphere of literature is undoubtedly the most dangerous, because "Dora" has an imperfect sympathy with editors and the whole tribe of leader-writers, correspondents and contributors. Taxi-driver Garner appears to be quite as rude with a pen in his hand as he probably is with a steering wheel. The *Licensed Vehicle Trades Record* appeared to Garner a tempting avenue to literary fame: what was its reason of existence except to publish his articles? Garner must have heard something of the ways of editors, for he never dreamed that his articles would be published *tels quels*. Accordingly, he let himself go.

To his horror and dismay, "O State, thou art a bestial thing" and "Who is to Blame?" appeared just as he had written them, fresh from the mint of a mind, perhaps a little exasperated by the restriction of petrol and a bare fare. For this liberation of his soul against the Government Garner had to pay £115 15s., surely a breaking of a butterfly upon a wheel. But let not Garner be discouraged. In these days a good head-line is worth a Jew's eye to the Press Gang. No matter about the article: the title's the thing. "O State, thou art a bestial thing" is an excellent title, and we feel sure that the Press Gang instead of prosecuting will, in future, pay Garner.

Mr. Gerard's chapter on the methods of German diplomacy does not tell us anything that we did not know, but it is well that the facts should be clearly stated by an ex-Ambassador. The German Ambassador at an important capital, such as London, Paris or Petrograd, is always an aristocrat—not always a gentleman, for the article is rare in Germany—but a nobleman of rank and wealth. He is, however, merely a decoy-duck, to invite people to dinner and say civil things to the Government. The real ambassador is the Councillor of the Embassy, who spies not only on the Government and the people whose hospitality he enjoys, but on his own chief, the Ambassador. Under the Councillor is a whole army of spies and secret agents, in all ranks of society and of all nationalities. Prince Lichnowsky was a gentleman, and was unconscious of the base use to which he was put by the Kaiser's Government.

In only one case was the titular Ambassador the real one, in that, namely, of Count Bernstoff at Washington. Bernstoff, whose wife is American and who speaks English very well, is the prince of spies, and would have made a small fortune and a big reputation in the Criminal Investigation Department of this or any country. Baron von Kuhlmann, too, seems thoroughly to have enjoyed worming himself into the confidence of his hosts, and reporting everything he could pick up at dinner and tea-tables. How is it possible to receive a German Ambassador after those revelations? A Consulate there must be: but there can be no Embassy for the next ten years. Why does the Government, which is ramping up and down London seeking whom it may evict, not take the German Embassy in Carlton House Terrace? It would be more conveniently situated than the British Museum. Then there is Sir Edgar Speyer's house in Grosvenor Street, a very fine mansion built out of the spoils of Throgmorton Street. It would be mere poetic justice to requisition this robber baronet's castle.

BETWEEN THE SOMME AND OISE.

THE Special Order of the 23rd inst, issued by Sir Douglas Haig to the troops in France and Flanders, will, we hope, awaken the Government and the public from the fool's paradise in which they have been disporting themselves too long. The language of Sir Douglas Haig is that of a man who knows the facts with which he is confronted, and who, without creating groundless alarm, wishes to impress upon his men the seriousness of the situation, and the necessity for great efforts of courage and endurance. Let us say at once that, in our opinion (for what it is worth), Sir Douglas Haig has handled the armies under his command with consummate skill and judgment. The danger arises from the fact that he has not enough men, which is certainly not his fault, but that of the War Cabinet. There is no question of being taken by surprise. Ever since the fall of Riga in August, 1917, the Government, if they had eyes, must have foreseen the collapse of Russia. Indeed in an article dated 1st September of last year, *The Saturday Review* predicted exactly what has happened, namely, that Russia would fall helpless into the maw of Germany, and be ruthlessly exploited. For writing that article we were warned that a breach of "Dora" had been committed, and that only as a matter of grace were proceedings not taken. That is nothing: but what is something, what is very much, is that the Government refused to read the writing on the wall; threatened everybody who dared to tell the truth: and went on making boastful speeches, without taking one single step to prepare for the inevitable. Is it not obvious, even to the man in the street, that when Germany had done with Russia, she would first make another offer of peace—for form's sake—and then concentrate all her armies on some point of the Western Front? We have not the slightest doubt that Sir William Robertson and Sir Douglas Haig were perfectly aware of this, and that they pressed on the Prime Minister the necessity of increasing the strength of our armies. The Government did nothing but talk—about submarines, about shipbuilding, while all the while Ireland is exempt from military service, and miners and engineers are civilly listened to while they expound their almost incredible nonsense about "combing out" and "dilutees."

The brave men on the Western Front are called upon to do the impossible: they are out-numbered and out-gunned. In modern war it is clearly established that success is a matter of weight in guns and men. Between two groups of nations, who are on the same plane of civilisation in point of equipment, and in whom the average rate of courage and intelligence is about the same, the issue will be decided by gun-metal and numbers. Certainly victory is not to be won by eloquent speeches and leading articles, which, though they may lift the hearts of men, are really very harmful, because they hide the facts. The British working-classes have been so long debauched by the *absinthe* of Trades-Union Socialism, that we fear they will have a terrible awakening, when the truth of the military situation can no longer be concealed. That portion of the press which is independent, and has not been bought by Government favours, is gagged by a censorship and by press regulations as severe and arbitrary as anything since the days of Sir Vicary Gibbs and Lord Sidmouth. See what has come of "doping" the public with "smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs!" The speeches of Ministers, and particularly those of the Premier, ought to have some relation to the facts of the military situation. The speeches of Mr Lloyd George have never had any relation to reality, but only to what he wished his hearers to believe, and what, no doubt, with his sanguine temperament he himself believed. We do not wish to spread alarm, for which we hope there is no ground, but the military position on the Western Front is very, very grave.

AN OXFORD STATESMAN.

DISRAELI, when he went into opposition, wrote a novel. Mr. Asquith soothes the feelings of a fallen Minister by publishing four Addresses to learned and polite societies, together with some Periclean orations, which latter obviously owe their appearance to his friendship and loyalty.* To lay down a newspaper or magazine and pick up this volume is to sequester out of the world of War Posters and the Press Gang into a cool and large library, where a great master of style is talking to you in polished periods about letters and life, about the books he has read, and the men he has known. It is a delightful change; and the first four addresses are a contribution to cultural literature as distinguished and stimulating as anything from the pen of Arnold, or Mr. Birrell or Lord Morley. This is no small praise to give to one who has passed through the Law Courts into the House of Commons, and there claimed and kept the highest post in the Empire for eight years. But that England had never greater need of Statesmen, we could almost wish that Mr. Asquith might never return to office, if haply, in such not inglorious exile, he might give us more of these essays.

At a time when criticism has sunk to the nadir of venal incompetence, and has become in the hands of most daily and weekly organs nothing but publishers' advertisements, the Address upon the dignity and importance of the critic's function is very opportune. Ten thousand books are published annually, of which it may safely be said that not more than fifty are worth reading. Intellectual authority there is none, and the publisher's only object is to get hold of "a seller," that is, something which by sedulous puffing, handsomely paid for in advertisements, may catch the half-educated millions. The editors must share with the publishers the responsibility for this literary anarchy. *The Edinburgh* and *The Quarterly* are devoted to the military and political topics of the hour; the daily and weekly journals pay next to nothing for reviewing, and expect the work to be done with a speed which makes it valueless. Criticism, as Mr. Asquith says, has a positive as well as a negative function: "it performs the double duty of solvent and stimulant." It must not merely point out faults; it must interpret with imagination, and without dogmatism or partisanship, tell you why you should like or dislike a book. "Flagellation in the sphere of criticism is often not only a salutary discipline, but a duty of imperative obligation; and no one but a puling sentimentalist will deny that, in the armoury of a well-equipped critic, room must be found for the bastinado and even for the knout. But treatment of this kind must be reserved for impenitent dullards and professional impostors—the recidivists of the literary and artistic world." Mr. Asquith's admiration of De Quincey's style strikes us as excessive, for it is never simple and often Corinthian. It is very true that "the stream of criticism never runs dry," and that amongst our English classics there is no subject on which the last word has been said.

Mr. Asquith shares Lord Beaconsfield's opinion that history is made up of biographies. The line between autobiography and biography is generally impossible to maintain, as in the case of Trevelyan's Macaulay, where the nephew allows his uncle to tell his own story in his correspondence. We quite agree with Mr. Asquith that Haydon's Diary is one of the best autobiographies we have, unpleasant and tragic as it is. Choosing from the many famous Lives in our language, we put in the first class, Lucy Hutchinson's Life of her Husband, Boswell's Johnson, Gibbon's Memoir, and Byron's letters. The persons best qualified to write a Life are the man himself, a near relation, or an intimate friend. The knowledge is a set off against the inevitable bias. Of biographies written at a distance perhaps the best is Lord Fitzmaurice's Life of Shelburne. Johnson, by the way, makes a shrewd remark about materials for biography, when he says.

* Occasional Addresses, 1893-1916, by the Right Hon. H. H. Asquith. Macmillan & Co. 6s. net.

"the widow is generally a failure, you will learn more of a man's character by talking to an old servant than by ransacking books of reference." Candour and absence of affectation are essential qualities of an attractive biography or autobiography. Of biographical essayists Bagehot easily bears the palm.

In "Ancient Universities and the Modern World," the Rectorial Address delivered at Glasgow University in 1907, we get the fine flower of an Oxford education, "the gatherings of a sober graduateship." Oxford and Glasgow, it is hardly necessary to point out, are bound together by the link of Balliol, a purely Scottish foundation. What service can an ancient University—which that refined artist and critic, Mr. Nevinson, describes as a "stinking" institution—render to the modern world? Mr. Asquith lifts the reproach of "academic" from its studies by showing that they are utilitarian, in the true sense of the term. Useful knowledge and knowledge of useful things are, as Hazlitt pointed out, different though often confounded. Mr. Asquith passes by the development of the memory, the taste, and the faculty of expression as obvious services of classical learning, and makes a higher, wider claim. "The man who has studied literature, and particularly the literature of the ancient world, as a student should, and as only a student can—I am not speaking of those to whom it has been merely a distraction or a pastime—such a man possesses resources which, if he is wise, he would not barter for a king's ransom." To illustrate this point the Lord Rector takes us on a short but charming trip through Hadrian's reign, gilt with the sunset glow of paganism. We cannot accept Mr. Asquith's final word that the material development of the last thirty years has been accompanied by a growing revolt against the ascendancy of intellectual and spiritual Nihilism. On the contrary we see many signs of a strong movement towards a pagan renaissance.

The Rectorial Address to the University of Aberdeen in 1910 is an essay on style, which is really the same in writing and speaking, and on which there is no greater authority than Mr. Asquith. Style is the product of constant study of the best writers and orators and of careful preparation. The unartistic masses have no idea of "the tedious ways of art," and of those who know, many will not take the trouble. "A vast deal of the slipshod and prolix stuff which we are compelled to read or to listen to is, of course, born of sheer idleness. When, as so often happens, a man takes an hour to say what might have been as well or better said in twenty minutes, or spreads over twenty pages what could easily have been exhausted in ten, the offence in a large majority of cases is due, not so much to vanity, or to indifference to the feelings of others, as to inability or unwillingness to take pains. And the uncritical world, just as it is apt to mistake noise of utterance for firmness of character, has an almost invincible tendency to think that a writer or orator cannot be eloquent unless he is also diffuse." Gladstone thought so, for he once spoke of "a very able, though concise, book." No living orator has a better right to use the words quoted above than Mr. Asquith, for none has carried the literary art of compression without sacrifice of clearness or illustration to a higher point of perfection.

We have entitled this article "An Oxford Statesman." Mr. Asquith, with his contemporary Lord Milner and his junior "fellow-student" Lord Curzon, are, we fear, the last of the breed. Other times, other manners. Mr. Lloyd George certainly belongs to a different school, and he has introduced a new type of statesman, the railway manager, and the Company promoter, who read type-written "statements" at the table that has been thwacked by Disraeli and Gladstone. It has not yet been proved that the absence of the articulate faculty and of all knowledge of the history and philosophy of the past produces superior efficiency in the art of Government: and until it is proved, we shall cherish our preference for statesmen who have learned in their youth "to know the best that is known and thought in the world."

COAL TAR.

Insolent vaunt of Paracelsus, that he would restore the original rose or violet out of the ashes settling from its combustion—that is now rivalled in modern achievement. . . . Chemistry, a witch as potent as the Erichtho of Lucan, has extorted by her torments, from the dust and ashes of forgotten centuries, the secrets of a life extinct for the general eye, but still glowing in the embers.

De Quincey, *The Palimpsest of the Human Brain.*

SWIFT, for once in a way, was on the side of the Philistines when he laughed at the Philosopher of Balnibarbi, who "had been eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers," for cucumbers are partly made of sunshine, and thousands of men to-day spend their lives in making light and warmth out of another vegetable product, coal. The Dean's friend, Berkeley, was on surer ground when, in his *Siris*, he sang the virtues of tar, and the water made from it. He saw that "the forms, souls or principles of vegetable life subsist in the light or solar emanation;" hence the virtues of tar-water, which, in the phrase which Cowper borrowed from Berkeley and applied to tea, "cheers but not inebriates." If Berkeley, as Pope declared, was gifted with every virtue under heaven, so, according to Berkeley, was tar-water, the friend of man, the antidote for all diseases. And why? Because in it lies sunshine "the spark of life, the spirit or soul of the vegetable" world from which tar-water comes.

By heating bituminous coal in retorts you get (1) Coal gas (2) Ammonia (3) Coal tar.

You cannot make apples or pears out of coal tar, but it sweetens your tea as saxon, the English form of saccharine, it perfumes your handkerchief as Jockey Club and New-mown Hay. It cures your headaches as aspirin and phenacetin and your rheumatism as salicylic acid, it moderates your fever as antipyrin, it cleanses your wounds as the antiseptic lysol, it heals your bruises as vaseline. It drives your motors as benzol, your internal combustion engines as creosote oil—it preponderates in your sheep dips and cattle washes, it flavours your food as vanilla, it develops your photographs as hydroquinone. From coal tar is derived atoxyl, the cure for sleeping sickness, and we look forward to its increasing efficacy as salvarsan (606) the cure of syphilis, and as acriflavine, the ideal antiseptic.

Coal tar is just a thick, dirty, common-place oily liquid, rather heavier than water. From the marriage of certain atoms in the molecules variously present in coal tar, we get directly or indirectly carbolic acid for disinfecting; creosote for our telegraph poles, railway sleepers, hutments and munition sheds; distilled tar for our dusty roads; picric acid and toluene for our T.N.T. (tri-nitro-toluene) and other explosives; naptha for our costermongers' barrows; naphthalene to keep the moths from our clothes; pitch for our fences, sheds and boats—pitch kept little Moses dry in his ark of bulrushes and it was used on Agamemnon's fleet, just as in Nelson's navy and our Yarmouth herring fishing boats of to-day, and from coal tar come dyes for everything we use and wear. The astonishing shades and harmonies of colour which we now enjoy, have their beginning in this richest of Nature's gifts to man; nor can we foresee a tithe of its uses, because over 150,000 combinations and permutations of the compounds of carbon are known to organic chemists and every day some fresh wonder emerges under the chemist's eye, some fresh example of serendipity.

The importance of the dye question can only be appreciated when it is realized that before the war the value of the aniline dyes used annually in this country was two and a quarter millions sterling, of which some two millions' worth came from Germany. These dyes were needed for British-made finished goods to the annual value of £200,000,000; without that two-and-a-quarter millions' worth of dyes, two million work-people would have been thrown out of employment.

And these were commercial products, not munitions of war.

The story of aniline dyes (Sanskrit *Nili*, indigo) is one of the romances of the world. The natural dyes, cochineal that gave our soldiers the name of redcoats; alizarin, madder, that gave us Turkey red—Madour was a Norfolk surname for a dyer in the days of Richard II.—the Tyrian purple of the ancients, for which, whether in its native *murex* or aniline substitute chemists tell us there is now no demand, the woad of our own ancestors, still grown in Lincolnshire, the indigo on which Indian factors once grew rich, the log-wood, now the most widely used of natural dyes for darkest blues and blacks and linked to history by the South Sea Company, the Assiento treaty, and the port of Campeachy, these sufficed us till last century. The very use of foreign grown indigo, indeed, was unknown in England until the middle of the 17th century, our own woad supplying all the blue we used. What a history centres round these dyes and dyed fabrics, from the days when Phœnician merchants brought the productions of Eastern looms to the ports and palaces of the West, to that strange reversal when Norwich calimancoes and "satins brilliants," besides shawls, carried the work of English looms into Germany, Siberia, and India, yea, round the Great Globe itself, till the eighties of last century. Now it is the synthetic dyes that count, dyes constructed out of coal tar compounds, springing up year by year in their many-hued radiance, and constructed like Bouillabaisse from a multiplicity of ingredients, from that mauve or Tyrian purple which Sir William Perkin first created in 1856, and the magenta whose battle-name commemorates its date, to the gentler colours of to-day. It was the German Hofmann, Professor of Chemistry at the then recently founded Royal College of Chemistry, who in 1862 uttered the unfulfilled prophecy, "England will, beyond question, at no distant date become herself the greatest colour-producing country in the world; nay, by the strangest of revolutions, she may, ere long, send her coal-derived blues to indigo-growing India, her tar-distilled crimson to cochineal-producing Mexico, and her fossil substitutes for quercitron and safflower to China, Japan and other countries, whence these articles are now derived." The Government-fostered undertaking called British Dyes, Limited, directed by politics rather than by skilled science, is at present the mouse born of the mountain; but the nation which originated aniline dyes can do better than this. The discovery of these dyes has, of course, had an immense influence on other industries and on chemical progress. To obtain certain colour effects, new reagents were required. Experiments are tried, and it is discovered that any substance only possesses colour while it can absorb given wave lengths of light: other wave-lengths simply passing through it; colour is therefore found to be associated with the presence of chromophors, that is, of certain arrangements, or groups of atoms, in the molecule. Further modifications of colour are required; behold, these groups are found to be susceptible of change in a given direction by the introduction of certain tar-derived groups, notably phenyl and benzyl, while modifications in the opposite direction can be attained by means of certain other groups.

Thus the production of synthetic dyes, which really goes back to Liebig's original synthesis of chloroform and chloral in 1832, has become a matter of ever-increasing knowledge, modified from year to year by such discoveries as sweet smelling substances and perfumes, and by the production of benzaldehyde for making colours from coal-tar instead of from bitter almonds. Synthetic dyes will act directly on silk and wool; on cotton only with the aid of a mordant, but the group known as azo-dyes need no such intervention, and by their means red and green are now produced upon the cotton itself, just as cotton is dyed khaki by means of sulphur dyes derived from coal-tar.

We have already alluded to alizarin or madder, that long descended plant which was introduced with weaving and black rats from the East to Germany, Flanders and Norwich by the Crusaders. But it was

left for the last century to discover a substitute of coal-tar origin, the hydro-carbon anthracene—looked on till then as a waste product—and thus to displace madder whose use is older than the Arabian Nights, older than Islam and the clash of East and West.

Reader, go out into your garden, look at the purple and saffron of the crocuses—look at the rose-pink of the almonds, the reds and yellows of the primroses, the pale gold of the jasmine and perhaps some early daffodil, and think of coal tar,* oily, glutinous, proverbial for its dirt. Touch pitch and be defiled indeed! Touch it with the magic wand of organic chemistry, and out of it, as out of Pandora's box, stream the colours of the kaleidoscope, the principles of life, of health, of sweetness; out of it too death and destruction—high explosives.

Just as the natural naphtha, the "perpetual fire" of the Zoroastrians, that water that was poured by Elijah in the altar trench upon Mount Carmel and consumed the sacrifice, once floating in shiny masses on the waves of some untapped spring in Southern Russia or Asia Minor, is transformed into the cheerful flare of the street market and of the swings and boats of the village merry-go-round, so the distillations of long unregarded coal-tar have their more complex uses for a thousand purposes and in a million scenes remote from the coal.

The discoverer of the modern use of coal-tar was English, but the Germans developed the idea. We detest sustained thought, as is shown by the disappearance of chess in favour of golf and bridge—all of a piece this, with the surrender of England's discovery of aniline dyes to industrious German patience, which can, and does, concentrate, whether on war or aniline dyes. We have yet to learn that the secrets of science are only unravelled by concentration of thought and disciplined mental and physical exertion. A nation which can say without shame that some of its citizens "do not go to the office on Saturdays," must and does, pay the penalty of laziness.

CHATTERTON.

Poor mad boy. That is the expression which rises most readily to the lips at the mention of Chatterton's name. Why do so many poets wander the streets destitute or starve in garrets when a little grain of common-sense would save them? Is it because the muse of poetry is of such dazzling beauty that the eyes of her lovers are blinded to all else, and that having hitched their wagon to a star they allow themselves to be dragged over boulders and chasms and are broken in the journey? Assuredly they travel "*per ardua*": let it be hoped that some of them arrive "*ad astra*" in the end.

It is an oft-noted fact that most of our English poets have been born either in London or in remote country districts. Very few have come from provincial towns. Either the influences of nature have presided over their birth, or else "Merry London" has been their "most kindly (or unkindly) nurse." To this rule Thomas Chatterton is an exception. Born at Bristol in 1752 he was the posthumous child of a sub-chantor of Bristol Cathedral, and his forefathers had for a century and a half been sextons of the Old Church of St. Mary Redcliffe. Chatterton's widowed mother, who was left in very straitened circumstances, sent her son at an early age to the local blue-coat school, and when he was fifteen he was apprenticed to an attorney named Lambert. It was while still at school that Chatterton began his brief career as an author, con-

* *The Treasures of Coal Tar*, by Alexander Findlay (Allen and Unwin). We recommend every layman who desires to learn about a most important subject to read this little book. It might have been written in language just a trifle more lucid, but with that reservation we can say it is a thoroughly useful bit of work.

30 March 1918

tributing verses to *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, and at the attorney's office he employed all his spare time in the composition of celebrated Rowley Forgeries with which his name is so closely connected. These poems Chatterton stated to be the work of a fifteenth century monk, named Thomas Rowley, poet laureate to the Bristol magnate Canynge, who lived in the time of Edward IV. Canynge was an authentic personage, often mentioned in the annals of Bristol, but both Rowley and his poems had their origin in the fertile brain of the attorney's apprentice. Chatterton was aided in his forgeries by being in possession of some ancient manuscripts taken during his father's life-time from an old chest in the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe. He actually wrote some of the poems on these parchments, and exhibited them as the original manuscripts of Thomas Rowley. Chatterton appears to have done his work at the attorney's office in a satisfactory manner, but long before his term of apprenticeship was up, he wearied of Mr. Lambert and of the law, and in order to free himself from his bond he wrote a "Last Will and Testament," in which he threatened to commit suicide the next day. The extravagant wording of this insane document had the desired effect, and he was given his liberty. It was now impossible for him to remain any longer in Bristol, for besides having lost his employment, he had made himself notorious by his satires on the local celebrities. He accordingly set off for London, there intending to make a living by his pen. This was in April, 1770, when he was seventeen and a half.

He had already contributed political articles and satires to several of the London papers, and on his arrival everything seemed to promise well. His audacity and self-confidence were unbounded; he called upon, and was favourably received by the editors of the *Middlesex Journal*, the *Town and Country*, and the *Freeholders' Magazine*. His activity also was prodigious; he wrote plays, poems, political articles with untiring vigour, but though his writings were printed, he was paid little for them at first, and in the end received nothing at all.

Living at first in Shoreditch, he moved after a few weeks to a garret in Brook Street, Holborn, where he wrote day and night almost without ceasing. But money became scarcer and scarcer, and brought to desperation, he remembered that he had once dabbled in medicine, and as a last resource thought of obtaining employment as a ship's surgeon. But this plan came to nothing. At length, in August 1770, when he was within three months of attaining the age of eighteen, and had been only four months in London, he was found dead in his attic, where he had poisoned himself by taking a dose of arsenic in water.

It is on the Rowley poems that Chatterton's reputation as an author rests. The remainder of his writings—satires, plays, political essays—are a wonderful production for a boy of his years, an example of unprecedented precocity, versatility, and audacity, but they can scarcely be said to demonstrate genius on the part of their author. In poetic quality the Rowley poems show their superiority. They are full of an imaginative vigour which is rare in the eighteenth century. The Chorus, for example, from *Goddwyn*, has an energy and strength which remind the reader of Dryden.

"When freedom, dressed in bloodstained vest,
To every knight her warsong sung,
Upon her head wild weeds were spread,
A gory anlace by her hung.
She danced on the heath
She heard the voice of death."

—and the plaintive and natural melody of one of the Minstrel's songs in *Ælla*, seems to show its kinship

rather to some of Ophelia's songs than to anything which the age of Johnson produced.

"Oh! sing unto my roundelay;
Oh! drop the briny tear with me;
Dance no more at holiday;
Like a running river be.
My love is dead
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

The general impression, in short, which is left on the mind of the reader of *Ælla*, *Goddwyn*, the *Ballad of Charity*, and the rest of the Rowley poems is that Chatterton has managed to escape from the eighteenth century, and that this "youngest singer," while shooting ahead of his contemporaries, has revived the spirit of another age:

"The tournament begins; the hammers sound;
The coursers lyse about the measured field;
The shimmering armour throws the sheen around;
Quaintissed fons depicted on each shield."

Whether this age is the fifteenth century or not, is of small importance; the fact remains that Chatterton has escaped from the atmosphere of the eighteenth century into a world of imagination.

Poetry of the highest order, whether lyric, epic, or dramatic, is a revelation of the infinite which surrounds our human life; as light passing through a prism is split up into the primary colours, so the "white radiance of eternity" shines through, and is coloured by the temperament of the poet. Now in few ages have men been so shut in from the eternal and from the wonderful as in the eighteenth century. In philosophy and in religion the eighteenth century proper is entirely materialistic, and in poetry and literature generally, it is too pre-occupied with social foibles, with periwigs and patches, with swains in kneebreeches and shepherdesses in hooped dresses to feel the breath of infinite things. If it translates Homer, it puts him into an eighteenth century dress, and this inability to understand any age but their own may explain why Chatterton's contemporaries were so easily deceived by the Rowley forgeries.

Surely to create a world of imagination as Chatterton has done, is the first step in the escape from materialism towards this higher poetry. The romantic glamour which surrounds Chatterton's name is no doubt largely due to his precocity, and to his early and tragic death, but it is also due in a great measure to this imaginative characteristic of his talent. He is like one born out of due time—a poet in an unpoetic age.

Visitors to the Tate Gallery will remember the striking picture by Henry Wallis, entitled, "The Death of Chatterton." The picture is modern, but its very modernity suits the subject, for it is

"As one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before"

as a link between two eras of poetry, that Chatterton makes his appeal. The painter seems to have realised this. The dead poet lies on the bed, his right hand, from which the phial of poison has slipped, hangs down, and grasps some of the torn manuscripts which strew the floor. His comely head droops to one side. From the expiring candle a wreath of smoke floats upwards, as though in emulation of the spirit which has fled. Dawn is breaking in the wretched attic, and through the little window across the roofs of the houses, the dome of St. Paul's is seen against the advancing light. The great heart of the city is awakening anew, but in the little room the flame of life is quenched, and gone is the Promethean heat that can its light relume. The dead boy lies there alone, unheeded and forgotten.

OUR OPERATIC STANDARD

FOUR out of the five weeks of opera graciously accorded us by Sir Thomas Beecham at Drury Lane are just ending, and, so far, in spite of a consistent record of full houses and "money turned away," no word of apology has been heard for the rude remarks previously levelled against the opera-goers of this metropolis. Perhaps Sir Thomas lays the flattering unction to his soul that the improved support is due to the sting of the lash which he has applied so vigorously at various times. If so, I would like to assure him that it is nothing of the kind; indeed, he was told some months ago in these columns that a little perseverance and a bit of luck in the matter of raids would soon prove London to be relatively quite as fond of opera as Manchester or Birmingham. The proof that such is the case should be heartily acclaimed, but the man with a reputation for never answering letters does not like to admit himself in the wrong at any time. On the other hand, if Sir Thomas Beecham would now kindly give to the capital the new opera-house which Manchester has not yet made room for, one would gladly cry in simple English "Blow the apology!"

In the meantime we are also looking hopefully towards the future in reference to the quality of the performances given by the Beecham Opera Company. While the audiences are improving they should improve also; and they need to. The repertory is growing, and with the heavier demands imposed upon the artists there is the necessity for fine singing as well as familiarity with the different operas and the routine of the lyric stage. But, where questions of beautiful vocal tone and finished vocalization are concerned, our public is, of course, much less exigent than it used to be. As Covent Garden and its traditions—the best, not the worst—recede more deeply into the obscurity of the past, we seem liable to lose touch more and more with the much-vaunted standard of the "palmy days" of opera. We are glad enough in all conscience to be rid of the star system and to see it replaced by efficient ensembles. But, after all, fine voices and really good singing are primary essentials of first-class opera. They cannot be overlooked or ignored because the average merit of the artists is passable, because the chorus is intelligent, or because the orchestra is so super-excellent that its sonorities generally serve to cover a multitude of individual sins.

The best vocal talent in the country at the present time is to be heard on the concert platform. Yet it includes some artists who have already won their spurs in opera, not to mention others of high promise who would have been trained for it by now had they seen half a chance of earning a livelihood thereby. Unfortunately the pick of these singers do not appear to find their way into the Beecham Company. What is the reason for this? What sort of vocal standard does the impresario-conductor apply to the debutants who come to him for a hearing? Does he engage only the best artists he can obtain and also not allow really good talent, when available, to slip through his fingers? No one asks for Melbas or Carusos or the other costly singing-birds who perch beyond ordinary reach; but at least we ought to have the kind that one can hear every day in English Opera as given nowadays in the United States. It is not to be credited that our British schools of music are incapable of producing any more Kirkby Lunn or Agnes Nicholls or Gleeson-Whites. The shortage of leading tenors and baritones worth hearing can more easily be accounted for; at the same time in Robert Radford, Robert Parker, Norman Allin this troupe can boast three of the best "singing basses" now before the public.

Apart from questions of individual merit, the standard of these performances could be raised to the right level by the exercise of a little more commonsense and a little less caprice in important matters of detail. The casting of the different operas is not invariably judicious. Singers who do admirably in some are not heard to advantage in others. Mr. Mullings, of the broad shoulders and the big tones, may make an imposing Samson or a powerful Othello; but where is the

poetry of his Tristan, the romance of his Tannhäuser? Such instances could be multiplied, but it is scarcely worth while. A more serious defect lies in the fact that distinctly different readings are given of the same work—one when Sir Thomas Beecham holds the baton, another when one of his five sub-conductors takes it in hand. He, in the first instance, decides the *tempi* (the more feverish specimens in 'Carmen' last Tuesday went dangerously near to a caricature of the original) sanctions or alters the phrasing of the vocal passages, follows or defies tradition according to his taste, and generally impresses the *cachet* of his own interpretative genius upon the whole representation. Then, when the opera is repeated a few nights later under a less daring leader the same things are not done; the music may possibly gain in one sense, but the singers and orchestra are not so well together and the effects are apt to become blurred. Just as too many cooks can "spoil the broth," so can too many conductors hurt the ensemble by disturbing with too many ideas the perfect unity of an opera company.

A great deal of valuable work is being done by this enterprise, which is directed with conspicuous zeal and in a very business-like manner. The increasing public support is a self-evident outcome of this stability and consistent smoothness of achievement. But there is only one standard for an institution that aspires to become national, and that is the highest.

H. K.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A HUNDRED YEARS OF WAR.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—In the *Saturday Review* of the 9th inst. you say that we must look forward to a hundred years of wars.

Our attention has of late been directed to a brand of Idealism which, this war finished and won, embraces the establishment of a League of Nations, and a condition of general amity amongst mankind; so that we have been led to contemplate our enemies being defeated, the vision of a world of prosperous industry, busy workshops, and quiet homesteads blessed with a sabbath of perpetual peace. That, as we understand it, is the ideal.

The German Emperor, however, is also an idealist and his vision appears to be, if not in his time, in the time of Germany's grandchildren, of a world largely dominated by the sword, and he points exultingly to the various "points d'appui" that his recent conquests have brought him and has already sent a telepathic communication to the Shah and the Ameer to the effect that he is drawing closer and that their "interests" are in his thoughts. This is apparently the Kaiser's idealism and there can be no doubt that the soul of the German people is with him.

Mr. Gerard has expanded that idealism thus:—

"And best of all in autocratic view, the manpower of the Central Empires will be so increased that at a propitious moment, in a characteristic sudden assault, the armies of the Central Empires will invade and conquer Palestine, Egypt and India, and take what they will in Africa and Asia, while British, Japanese, and American and French Navies impotently rave in useless control of the high seas." so that it would seem that we must contemplate not Leagues of Peace but the arming not only of Europe and America but of Asia, Australasia, Africa and the Oceanic islands, to combat this coming peril and that your forecast of a hundred years of war may be realised. And is it not better to consider all possibilities? It cannot be good for the nation's thought to forecast that when we have won this war we can sit down and enjoy a period of uninterrupted peace. Surely, for a generation to come at least, our position must be that of the strong man armed.

The Idealism which we are taught appears to taboo Imperialism, whatever that may mean. It would be a

(5) Why all this talk about the Continental and inter-good thing if some enlightened member of the Legislature, like Lord Denbigh, were to instruct the men in the street what Idealism and what Imperialism are.

Most of us can remember when the "cut the cable" party were a strong power in this country, regarding our colonies as a source of trouble and inconvenience. To-day is there anyone who does not regard them as priceless treasures, indispensable members of the Imperial body? Our ideal in those days was surely imperialistic and it has been realised. What should be our ideal to-day? The genius of our race has in the past constructed out of rude materials in the wilderness of barbarism powerful self-governing communities and has conferred on aboriginal populations the world over the priceless blessings of peace, liberty, freedom and security of life and property. Is this glorious mission to pause in its purpose? Surely the Anglo-Saxon who has conducted it cannot do so, but must either get on or get out. If it is an Imperialistic ideal to wish to see the flag left flying where it flies to-day, it is one which I believe the people of the Empire possess in strong degree. Neither can they wish to see the mediaeval sovereignty of Germany occupying any yard of the earth's surface which it is possible for them to prevent, nor can they regard with complacency the settling down again of that Power on our communications in all parts of the world.

This war must have changed the thoughts of our people somewhat. They have witnessed the atrocities of both militarism and what is known as Bolshevism. They have seen Russia jump from the frying pan of autocracy into the fire of democracy, and will probably conclude that a middle system of Government, such as prevails in this country, is the best, and will endure.

The realisation of ideals is somewhat difficult, but it is good to have them to work up to. Our ideal in this war has been defined by our statesmen, and by those of our Allies, as the overthrow of the military power of our chief enemy and if that purpose include making the world unsafe for the military despot and the Bolshevik, it is an ideal worthy of all acceptance, and if realised, as we hope and pray, may bring us an era of peace, prosperity and progress.

Yours faithfully,

J. F. L. ROLLESTON.

54, Curzon Street, W.

THE HOUSE OF MERLINS—WANTED: A MAN'S LEAGUE FOR MEN.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—The insulting and truculent letter of Miss Marion Pickett ought to serve as a warning to men as to what they may expect when the exponents of feminism comes into power. This unique person does not seem to recognise that "Motherhood" is opposed to advanced feminism, for the interests of the married women are undoubtedly bound-up with those of her men folk and not with selfish and domineering feminists. And what right have those women who have neither the intention nor the courage to bear children themselves to make the excuse of "Motherhood" a reason for demanding equal rights with men? As for men "laying down the law"—who, I should like to know, has more right, since but for our fighting men there would have been no British Empire left to-day?

Miss M. Pickett goes on to say that "there are a few loud-voiced man-haters, but they are very much in the minority." Quite so, but this minority is large enough to injure the men's interests, as everybody knows. In fact—and this is worth noting—this minority is

gradually poisoning the minds of the majority against the men.

Miss M. Pickett of course trots out the usual parrot eulogy of "women's wonderful war work," which we have heard over and over again *ad nauseam*. There is a certain class of women who are suffering from an exaggerated sense of self-importance. But the English-woman has never had the pluck or spirit to take an equal share in the work of the trenches, although she is continually whining for equal privileges and rights with the men at home. Equal rights should mean equal responsibility and the duty of a Man's League would be to enforce this.

The cunning way in which Miss M. Pickett essays to divide the men into "real men" and weaklings is amusing and will delude no one. Of course the "real men" are those weak-kneed individuals who are ready to play the part of traitor to their own sex in order to curry favour with women. The "weaklings," of course, are self-respecting, strong-minded men who have a fit sense of pride in their manhood and who have no intention of coming under petticoat government, whether political, social or economic. The fact that Miss M. Pickett and those like her would very much like to prevent the men from forming a Man's League should make us all the more determined to form one. I hope Mr. Gosset will call a meeting as soon as possible, in order to get the scheme started.

Yours truly,

D. S. FRASER.

QUO VADIS?

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Whither are we rushing on the Gadarene descent? Mr. Lloyd George has now blessed with apostolic unction the "nationalisation" of railways and water-ways—as well as the increase of pensions for the hordes now subsidised by Friendly Societies, and "other matters" presented for his "cordial sympathy," by Messrs. Thorne and Bowerman, who are put forward as representatives (by Sidney-Webbian appointment) of the "Will of the People." The Premier sees "no reason" why these "nationalisations," at any rate, should wait for "the end of the war"—which his own blunders about Russia (and Ireland and India and Mr. Winston Churchill) have protracted. Let me venture to give him some "reasons":—

(1) The "nationalisation" of railways would mean not only the perpetuation of paralysing "control" on the Continental model, which, as a Briton, he sees fit to praise, but the issue of additional huge amounts of Government stock which would instantly be sold by their unhappy recipients, to the great detriment of British credit.

(2) It would also mean everlasting demands for extortionate wages by a Government that, if it surrendered, would betray independence, initiative, and indeed freedom; and if it withstood, would create a Bolshevik revolution.

(3) These demands, as we know from previous capitulations, will be epidemic, or, in the cant phrase, "sympathetic." Every industry would make similar demands, and the whole burden would fall on the extinguished tax and rate payers. Productiveness would be nullified. The "bourgeoisie," in disappearing, would bankrupt the "State," ruin the country and alienate the Empire. For the expropriation is not the increase of "wealth." On the contrary, it means its neurotic exhaustion. Years ago Mr. Bernard Shaw urged "Labour" thus to drive in the thin edge of the wedge.

(4) The effect on the national character would be inexpressible. England would become a bureaucratic almshouse for incompetent greed, and initiative—which is the fuel of life—would not only be wasted but annulled.

national model? Great Britain has thriven just because she has been a spirited, individual, and energetic exception to a system which, in France (where in railways at any rate, it is exceptional) is to the best French minds deplorable, and, in Germany, imposes an arrogant officialism on effort and competition. The system is one of that dragoning despotism which is now hailed as "Democracy."

(6) The whole thing is on a line with the "Brotherhood of Nations" plan which is the latest cure-all of "Democracy." An economic boycott, it is said, will bring Germany to heel. But—pace American and English Senators—will it deprive an unscrupulous and able Prussia of the markets which through Russia's collapse, it might well (or ill) be able to commandeer? On every side windy phrases are being taken for achieved facts. Also the scheme involves "The Freedom of the Seas, or, in other words, the surrender of our sea-power and the restitution of Malta and Gibraltar.

The truth is that Mr. Lloyd George's ignorance is colossal—and he is ignorant that he is ignorant in his appeal to an ignorance practised upon by organised conspirators. He is a Fabian Socialist who has not even studied Fabianism, but depends on the first word of a few faddists or the last of an aggrandised mob. The old Parliament is enslaved and effete. The new will be bribed and unconscionable. How long are those, who do the most, to allow an intolerable burden and, by apathy, to abet the political dry rot.

Faithfully yours,
WALTER SICHEL.

THE MARCONI IMBROGLIO: LATEST PHASE.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—The bewilderment of the laity increases as they watch another unsavoury incident of the great scandal on the legal cinema. It strengthens the demand for a full investigation; but the time for that consummation is not yet. Two subordinate queries affecting the present phase suggest themselves to any impartial observer. They are the following: assuming that the Postmaster-General did not contest the Marconi claim without taking the advice of the Law Officers, why did they advise him to defend it? Having advised him to fight, why did they leave him in the lurch?

The present fiasco is a replica of the Archer-Shee case when a sum exceeding £7,000 of public money was paid as compensation. The case was defended by the Law Officers. But, just as in this case, Sir Edward Carson came, saw, and conquered. The Senior Law Officer smilingly congratulated the injured parent; and all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds for the mercenaries of the Bar.

Another curious point: why does the *Times*, while professing to provide verbatim reports of the principal speeches in the House of Commons, occasionally edit them and exclude such significant passages as the following? "It would have been easy for him to go on for a fortnight earning big fees arguing against his own conviction." This passage appears in the *Morning Post's* report of the Attorney-General's speech in the issue of March 20th.

I am, etc.,
OBSERVER.

[Counsel's opinion on the facts at first submitted to him by plaintiff or defendant is often changed or modified by an ampler acquaintance with the case as it develops.—ED. S.R.]

BANKING REFORM.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—This question, which has been agitated for so long, has been forced into prominence by the war and

now stands apparently for immediate settlement. A right solution means much to business men, and it is not surprising that the Annual Meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce has decided to discuss it next month. Resolutions have been put down in the names of the Norwich and London Chambers respectively which differ essentially in their lines of thought. Neglecting minor points, two main ideas are involved, and these alone I desire to discuss. The first is whether the Act of 1844 (Act 7 and 8 Vict. c. 32) should be repealed or amended, and the second whether there should for the future be a hard and fast line drawn as to the proportion of metallic cover and securities respectively to be maintained against the note issues of the Bank, or whether there should also be a provision for the expansion of note issues without metallic cover in times of pressure or panic.

The Norwich resolution advocates repeal of the Act, the London resolution advocates amendment. The Norwich resolution advocates a hard and fast line, the London resolution advocates a provision for expansion, when and if required. As regards repeal or amendment, it appears to me clear that the London proposal is correct. The advocates of repeal seem to forget that the Act contains many provisions in addition to those relating to the separation of the Issue Department from the Banking Department.

I cannot attempt to discuss these other provisions in detail. They relate amongst other things to a provision permitting the holding of one-fourth of the metallic reserve of the Bank in silver and at the discretion of the Directors, to the obligation upon the Bank to exchange notes for bullion at the price of £3 17s. 9d. per ounce, to the payment of certain profits on the issue to the Government, to a prohibition of the establishment of new banks of issue, to the regulation of the issues of then existing banks, to the acceptance of bills by banks trading within 65 miles of London, to the cancellation of the Bank of England's privileges if the Government debt to the Bank is repaid, and so on.

These provisions may be broadly stated to be for the most part embedded in our banking legislation and to form part of its texture. If we repeal the Act the whole of them will be thrown into the melting pot and no one can tell with what result.

Therefore I hold that the proposal to repeal the Act as advocated by the Norwich Chamber is unsound and dangerous, and that we should proceed by way of amendment and not of repeal. A minor point, but one of some importance, is whether action should be taken at once, as advocated by Norwich, or as soon as can safely be done having regard to existing circumstances, as recommended by London. Clearly, to my mind, the latter is the proper course.

I now come to the question of whether there should be a hard and fast line as regards the metallic reserve or a provision for expansion of the issues without metallic cover in times of stress. In my judgment the latter is the only sound course to follow, and in this respect also London is right and Norwich is wrong. The reasons for this appear to me overwhelming.

First we have the experience gained under the Act itself. In each case where it has been necessary to suspend the Act it has been because maintenance of the hard and fast metallic limit threatened to produce disaster. These suspensions occurred in 1847, 1857 and 1866, and in each case the moment it was known that the Act was to be suspended, that is to say that the Bank was to be allowed to issue notes without additional metallic cover, the panic passed away. Then we have to guide us the action of the United States, which, after an exhaustive enquiry extending over a period of years, passed the Federal Reserve Act, under which in times of stress a provision comes automatically into operation whereby notes may be issued without metallic cover upon payment to the Govern-

ment of a tax or fine increasing progressively as the issues increase.

We have thus the experience of our own country and the action of the United States Government after mature deliberation, both confirming the contention that provision for expansion of issues in times of stress is desirable and indeed necessary. Why should we neglect these facts? If we do neglect them and legislate in the direction of a hard and fast rule as recommended in the Norwich proposal we shall be under the necessity of suspending our new Act in times of pressure just as in the past we had to suspend the old Act.

I am, etc.,

F. FAITHFULL BEGG.

Bartholomew House, E.C.

TO SAVE FUEL, ETC.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—The proposed closing of theatres and restaurants at 9.30 brings up the daylight saving question as the correct solution.

"Summer time"—the saving of one hour of daylight—commenced last Sunday, 24th inst., and terminates on September 29th. That gives us six months saving of an hour. An extra hour during four months can be easily gained by putting the clock forward another hour from Sunday, April 21st until Sunday, August 25th, when the sun rises an hour earlier and sets an hour later than on the two limit dates now fixed. This is surely the simplest and most satisfactory method of effecting the Coal Controller's need of economy, as it would operate in every household without interfering with existing time-tables and habits. For example, there would be no need for theatres to close before 10.30 to attain the same end as the suggested closing at 9.30 under the existing law.

Let the extra hour be considered as a war economy measure. Such slight inconvenience as might occur would be trifling in comparison with the enormous advantages, both as to economy of fuel and production of food. No great hardship could possibly be caused by a trial of the alteration. Blind-drawing troubles and changes of lighting-up times will almost disappear as far as the majority of the people are concerned.

The late Mr. Willett had to spend many years' effort to effect the one hour saving we now enjoy—and only the War-time need of economy caused it to be tried. To-day the almost unanimous verdict is so favourable that "Summer time" is practically certain to remain with us as an institution.

My suggestion would give us an extra hour's daylight during the four summer months. Once tried, I cannot imagine that an ordinary person would wish to return to the old habit of wasting the best part of the day.

Yours faithfully,

SAMSON CLERK.

THE AMERICAN EAGLE ON ST. PAUL'S.

To the Editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW.

SIR,—Many Londoners, of course, see little of their Capital, but the observant eyes of American naval and military visitors may have espied, up in the sunshine, in high relief, on the pediment of the splendid south front of St. Paul's Cathedral, their national emblem, the bird of freedom, or "Old Abe," as the eagle-mascots of the Union regiments of the States were called, from some fancied semblance to the stern glance and features of their great President, Lincoln.

The eagle on St. Paul's Cathedral (the clever work of Colley Cibber's father, like the panels on the monument at London Bridge) has a different origin, but it is fine to feel that the emblem of our Ally occupies so national monument, and centre of public worship.

Your obedient servant,

J. LANDFEAR LUCAS.

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The FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW.

CONTENTS, APRIL, 1918.

- Obiter Scripta. IV. By Frederic Harrison, D.C.L.
- Bolo and the Ex-Khedive. By Sir Malcolm McIlwraith, K.C.M.G.
- Lenin as Protégé of the Old Régime. By E. H. Wilcox.
- Vauvenargues and the Sentiment of "La Gloire." By Edmund Gosse, C.B.
- "Side Shows" in the War. By Archibald Hurd.
- Russia—Another Federation of the Rhine? By Fabricius.
- A German Tyranny in the Baltic. By Y.
- Eugene Brieux, Moralist. By W. L. Courtney.
- Japan and the War. By E. Bruce Mitford.
- The British Army on the Italian Front. By Julius M. Price.
- Women and the Civil Service. By Elizabeth S. Haldane.
- Theodore Roosevelt. By James Davenport Whelpley.
- Fashion Rations. By Mrs. Aria.
- Agriculture after the War. II. By E. Lipson.
- History of the War. With Maps.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL, LIMITED.

REVIEWS.

RUSSIA IN DISRUPTION.

Russia's Agony. By Robert Wilton. Arnold, 15s. net.

War and Revolution in Russia. By John Pollock. Constable, 6s. net.

HERE we have two books on Russia; the first by a "Times" correspondent, who has been at the heart of things for the last fourteen years, the second by one who has travelled the country up and down on missions connected with the war. Mr. Wilton's is a reasoned narrative; Mr. Pollock's a collection of papers written at various dates, though he tells a consecutive story; that of the outbreak of the revolution for example, uncommonly well. They convey the same lesson, that the Russians are a people lacking in the sense of continuity. Mr. Stephen Graham and others have enlarged on "the soul of Russia," and a pleasing mysticism is to be found, no doubt, in its faith, its novels and its music. But though the Russians may possess their souls in patience, varied by antinomian outbursts, they cannot work out their material salvation in a world of hard facts. They have allowed their finance to pass into the hands of the Jews, and their factories under the control of aliens, mostly Germans. Before the war broke out, British business was well represented in Petrograd, and in the billiard-room of the Hôtel d'Angleterre one might almost have been back at Thurston's; our interests were strong, of course, in the oil-fields. Still British merchants and shipping agents could not employ the pull on the administration which their German rivals exercised without scruple, and though the guide-books perpetrated the delusion that every educated Russian spoke French, Ollendorf had become the lingua franca. The nation had already dreamed away its "right of self-determination."

The so-called autocracy was not an autocracy at all. "Russia," said Nicholas I. long ago, "is ruled not by me, but by my forty thousand clerks." The bureaucracy in turn was overshadowed by the Okhrana, or inner circle of police, an institution originally started, by an ineptitude characteristically Russian, to look after the widows and the fatherless. It is painful to remember that this chaotic affair extracted loan after loan from the thrift of Western Europe on the strength of sham political reforms and of military reconstruction which never came to anything. Mr. Wilton, who has smelt powder, gives a capital account of the Russian army, and of the fine programme which, but for the unfortunate intervention of the Germans, ought to have been carried out this very year. "Ought" is a necessary qualification; August, 1914, at any rate, found Russia with hordes of unskilled peasants thrust from the soil into barracks, but no heavy guns, no machine guns, not nearly enough rifles, and next to no munitions. Was Sukhomlinoff a traitor or merely a fool? Mr. Wilton inclines to the more charitable interpretation, and Sukhomlinoff seems to have been thwarted at every turn by the Grand Duke Sergius Mikhailovich; but really it does not matter now. To Mr. Pollock's observant eye, everything looked most promising. There were lashings of soup in the pot for the soldier; the hospital equipment was splendid, the nurses charming and devoted. Only, as he could not know, big guns, rifles and munitions were wanting.

Reform, meanwhile, proceeded with inconsequent jerks like a broken-backed caterpillar. The Douma was futile, but the Zemstvos, or county councils, began well, until they became suspect of the Okhrana, and certain it is that the "third element," or the teachers, surveyors and so forth (the other two elements being the peasants and property owners), inclined to revolutionary doctrines. But the factories were the real seed-bed of the upheaval, as the Government understood full well. We perceive, therefore, ill-considered attempts to secure the loyalty of the peasants, such as Stolypin's abolition of the communal system in favour of individual holdings. "We place our stakes," he

said, "on the strong man." But the strong men had their allotments already. The village wastrels were turned loose on society: that was all. Finally came the Tsar's childish attempt to make the country sober by edict, a quack-remedy which so impressed a certain English editor that he actually proposed that it should be imitated over here, on the Clyde, for instance. Yet the Friend of Humanity himself would have perceived the futility of a "dry" ukase if he had studied a working-class quarter; take that in Petrograd near the Moscow station, on any of the numerous national holidays. At noon the men were tangle-footed, very, very drunk, and very, very happy; towards evening they fought and thrashed their wives. The older folk did not mind much at first; they had had their fling. The youngsters grumbled savagely, and by and by, both young and old, began to drink "methylated spirit varnish, eau-de-cologne and various 'knock-out' drops."

Mr. Wilton and Mr. Pollock are in substantial agreement that the revolution of 1917 was the revolt of 1905 postponed. In the interval the Okhrana, the Tsaritsa, Rasputin, hunger and disasters in the field of war gave an irresistible impetus to the forces of darkness. Every change of ministry made for the worse, and at last it came to Rasputin's creature, the lunatic Protopopoff, who put machine-guns on the roofs, whereas a prescient Tsar had so built the Nevsky that it could be raked from end to end and from side to side. Go up any of the spur-streets, which apparently lead to nowhere, and in a hundred-and-fifty yards or more you bump up against barracks. Yet there were brave hearts in Russia that battled well against adversity. The Generals, or most of them, did not flinch. Mr. Pollock gives an engaging portrait of Alexeieff, small, pink-cheeked, smiling and loquacious. He hates being photographed, it appears, and the camera certainly invests him with a forbidding scowl. Rodzianko, President of the Douma, made an honest attempt to save the monarchy, but his menages were suppressed or the Tsar hesitated. Prince Lvoff does not emerge a definite figure, though he appears to have been a man of ability and integrity who was appointed too late and tied hand-and-foot to the revolution.

Kerensky and Lenin confront one another in the old, old contrast of the amateur and professional. The lawyer, a man of words, bamboozled the statesmen of the West because they were men of words themselves. Hence it pleased our Prime Minister to compare him to St. Just, the associate of Robespierre and Couthon, whereas he was really a dwarfed Rienzi, a tenth-rate Lamartine. He comes, perhaps nearer to Rienzi than to the ebullient Frenchman, both in his treachery, as in his monstrous betrayal of brave Korniloff, and in the cowardice of his flight from the Winter Palace, leaving the cadets and girl-volunteers behind him to be butchered. He styled himself generalissimo, but Rienzi was Knight of the Holy Ghost, a finer title. In one of his official visits to Tsarskoe Selo, Kerensky unbosomed himself to his captive on the burdens of rule. Nicholas II. can be forgiven much for his reply: "I can assure you, Alexander Fedorovich," he sympathized, "that I had the same trouble. But you will find, as time goes on, that it becomes easier." "Kerensky," said Lenin with a shrug to the correspondent of the *Matin*, "Kerensky is nobody." Oulianoff, otherwise Lenin, is somebody. A Russian of gentle birth, with a brother who died on the scaffold, and a spell of Siberia to avenge, he brooded in exile for ten years. The moderate revolutionaries made the hideous blunder of allowing him to return to Russia, his pockets bulging with German money, and his head stuffed with the doctrines of Karl Marx, and of Karl Marx at his most destructive period.

Mr. Pollock's episodes end in September, 1917; Mr. Wilton's story comes down to some months later when the Brest-Litovsk farce had been staged. Their history is therefore incomplete, and their speculations are more or less obsolete already.

LIFE IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE.

A War-Time Voyage. By J. E. Patterson. Dent. 6s. net.

A VOYAGE in a tramp-steamer undertaken for the sake of health might be a rest-cure, a calm series of idle days, but that is the last thing we should expect the restless, insurgent spirit of the author to achieve. The interest of the book lies in its little encounters of temper and its outspoken criticism. Mr. Patterson is one of the literary sailors who have forsaken the sea for writing, and, like most of them, a lover of fine phrases. He is a born rebel and a fighter for his own hand, having, if we remember right, faced a formidable old gander at the age of five and killed it with a hammer. He is a born vagabond, too, one of those who do not like playing second fiddle to anybody. Self-taught, he believes in his teacher, and his frank, independent criticism has a distinct value in these days of subserviency to the shout of the largest crowd. His 'Voyage' is a revelation of himself as well as his associates, and we cannot credit him with an altogether happy temperament. His personal and literary dignity is too easily disturbed for his comfort.

Nominally a purser, he was in the position of an "owner's passenger," and a writer of books among people who had little idea of them. At the same time he was reviving old lore in the Merchant Service, and indulged in physical work which the doctor had forbidden. Several times when he was ashore he ran the risk of losing his tramp steamer, and he suspects that the Captain would not have been wholly indisposed to lose him. The misunderstandings were not entirely one-sided, and some of them do not seem worth a quarrel or a fit of the sulks. If we all took a sudden flare up of temper seriously, the world would be a terrible place. An officer threatened to "pulverise" the author, who doubted whether anyone could be sure that Burns wrote of porridge, unless he could mention the precise poem. One might think that porridge in Burns was as certain as beef in Shakespeare or beer in Borrow, and, as a matter of fact, we know off-hand that the "chief o' Scotia's food" occurs where one would expect it, in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' A mere bit of memory or its absence is not worth a serious dissension. In talk such things do not matter, but we should have been glad to see a famous quotation from 'Macbeth' put right in the print of p. 6. Variants on Shakespeare are not usually improvements.

We are left somewhat in doubt as to the effect of the voyage on the author's health. We hope all ended well, in spite of his vagaries, for the cruise, if it did nothing else, has provided an entertaining book. The *obiter dicta* are often shrewd, and the little touches concerning the people and things seen are vivid. The criticism, though we take it occasionally with a thing easily secured at sea, *cum grano salis*, is worth considering. When Mr. Patterson was in the Merchant Service, it was a severe, if not shocking, servitude. Now the pendulum has swung too much the other way. Jack thinks himself as good as his master, or better. Mr. Patterson deplores the effects of Socialism and the interloping agitator. Moral and discipline are not what they were:—

"For rough human fibre and rather frequent brutalism we have brought in a sort of emasculated seamanhood, in which effeminacy is not altogether absent, albeit it gets drunk as soon as it arrives in harbour."

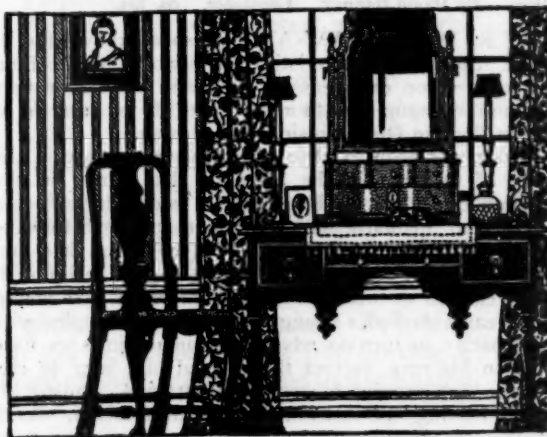
Deckhands to-day are not so British as they were. Can we rely equally on foreigners and coloured men? That is the question which other sailors besides Mr. Patterson have been asking themselves of late years. The state of America's seamen is still worse as recorded by the author, but America has not, like these islands, a long and proud record as a maritime nation. If a race of soft boys is not going to risk the romance of the sea, the country will be in a poor way, and no

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amount of young geniuses cockered up with special education will put it right.

To-day, further, at sea we have to contend with the stupidity of officials. There is enough evidence of it at home just now, and here is a specimen of it abroad, in Italy.

"Because of red-tape and a blunder or two in London we had to leave that port with some thirty-odd sacks of "sweepings" aboard—i.e., wheat swept up in the holds and more or less fit for use when cleaned. The worst of it would have made good fowl food. But officialism said it could not be put ashore. That was repeated in Bermuda, Philadelphia and Gibraltar. Now the same thing is occurring here. Because these thirty-odd sacks of food-stuff are not part of the cargo, we must take them to sea again, finally heave it overboard! Meanwhile, there are bread restrictions in every belligerent country!"

Those in authority on ships who know their business may well be disgusted at such follies as this. Fortunately our naval officers are first-rate and long-suffering. The confidence and competence and the brief humour of the Captain of Mr. Patterson's tramp make a pleasing picture. We like his remark on the tendencies of to-day in letters:—

"Y'know, Purser, it seems to me, if I understand you aright about literature an' journalism an' that, there's too little literature in your journalism, an' a damn'd sight too much journalism in your literature. An' in my opinion American magazine journalism is all away ahead of ours."

Mr. Patterson insisted successfully on avoiding the interviewer in a voyage of over 20,000 miles which included a visit to seven ports. That is a creditable performance. He gives us, however, his own photograph as a frontispiece for the second time within a few years. We note also that his Preface is needlessly long and elaborate. He is apt to overdo his language: he has "a mint of phrases in his brain."

DIAZ THE DESPOT.

Diaz. By David Hannay. Constable. 6s. net.

MR. DAVID HANNAY'S personal knowledge of Spanish characteristics and customs, and his fund of information on events of past and parallel history admirably equip him to record the life of José de la Cruz Porfirio Diaz, President of Mexico.

Diaz was born in 1830 of humble parentage in the city of Oaxaca, in the State of that name, in the Republic of Mexico. His father is said to have been a pure bred Spaniard, but we know that long before the birth of either parent or son anyone who had not too conspicuous a stain of Indian blood to be ignored, was classed as white. We are informed that young Diaz early showed a strength of character, coupled with a capacity to turn to advantage such things as Fate put in his way, factors that helped him later to rise to the high position he eventually attained. During his early training for three of the four professions, which, before the British aristocracy descended to commerce, were considered to be the vocations of gentlemen, he undoubtedly profited by the influence and knowledge so gained. While being prepared for spiritual administration, Diaz probably laid the foundation of certain standards of integrity which in after years won him the complete confidence of the United States, and the approbation of Europe. While studying law, Diaz doubtless acquired a quickness of perception to enable him to deal promptly with unexpected situations; lucid

reasoning power leading to sound judgment, and an appreciation of justice which it was not always easy for him to administer. The longest period of his varied and unconscious preparation for the Presidency of the Mexican Republic was spent in the Army, which tended to increase his courage and resolution; two important essentials for the government of a country in the early evolutions of civilization. This portion of his training enabled him, upon becoming President to duly value discipline, and appraise the sword as of primary assistance in the good government of Mexico.

Diaz was at heart a thorough soldier, and rose to be a General, and finally Commander-in-Chief of the Mexican Republican Army, fighting from 1864 to 1867 against Maximilian and the Imperial cause. During these thrilling times the author gives us a vivid account of hardships heroically borne, stirring events of strategy, and satisfactory successes against the French and Australian troops, culminating in the capture of the City of Mexico. By cutting off the supplies of food, Diaz weakened the inhabitants and Imperialists, and drawing his forces closely round the city, eventually caused it to capitulate. Upon the occupation of the Capital by the Republic, we come to events which were to show whether Diaz possessed those qualifications which would aid him to go further and to rise higher. He gave substantial proof of his capabilities for Government by his able administration of power upon entering the city. His countrymen recognised that he was a man fit to rule, and here his military life ceased, and at the age of forty-five his political career began.

Those who know little of Mexico, that country of conflict and contrast, where even nature's wealth and poverty prove adverse elements to steady advancement, cannot adequately estimate the stupendous task Diaz undertook when he became ruler of the Mexican Republic.

The north-west of Mexico was inhabited by tribes of pure savages, who had never been subdued under any previous government, and who, during the French occupation, were actively opposed to the Mexicans. The remainder of the populations were Creoles, half-breeds and Indians. Anarchy was rampant and had to be checked before Diaz could attempt to form the basis of a beneficial Government, or develop the material prosperity of the country. This Diaz readily realised, and with the assistance of the army, now paid regularly instead of precariously, as hitherto, he turned turbulence into tranquility.

We then read of his impressing upon the attention of Congress that the ultimate advancement of the country necessitated such substantial things as ports, railways, roads, drainage, and the development of natural resources. If his method of government was at times despotic and tyrannical, the unstable community he was called upon to rule required choleric control, and improved under it. That he was right in relying on fighting force rather than upon elevated ethics in governing a country in the early stages of civilised development is shown by the fact that in the time of his advancing age and vanishing vigour anarchy again reared its hideous head.

Force kept Diaz President of the Mexican Republic for the unprecedented period of some thirty years, where previous Presidents had risen and fallen almost yearly.

Mr. Hannay gives us a powerful pen-picture of a potent personality. If he takes a more lenient view of the dark defects in Diaz than other writers have done, is he to be blamed for the greater tolerance arising from greater understanding?

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Fight Against Venereal Disease
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THE position is full of menace. Venereal Diseases are undermining the fighting strength of the Army; they are threatening the very homes of the people; they are involving innocent lives and destroying the infants. History has always shown an increase in Venereal Diseases after a War. There is grave reason to fear that this War will prove no exception to the rule. It is expected that upon demobilisation the incidence of Venereal Disease will vastly increase, and that it will spread to those rural districts which have hitherto been practically free from this plague.

What has been done.

1. 102 Free Treatment Centres in Counties and County Boroughs have been provided by the Authorities.
2. Legislation has been passed suppressing Quack Treatments and Quack Remedies in all areas in which Treatment Centres are provided.
3. 40 Branches of the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases have been set up, covering 54 local authorities.
4. Propaganda has been undertaken in 56 additional Towns.
5. The National Council has arranged 2,000 lectures to over one million and a-half soldiers; and 1,600 lectures to civilian audiences.
6. Large quantities of literature have been issued to show the perils of Venereal Diseases.

The Immediate Work of the National Council.

1. To prevent the spread of Disease upon demobilisation.
2. To take immediate steps to further the provision of facilities for Free Treatment where these are not yet set up.
3. To secure that the conscious transmission of Venereal Disease should become a penal offence.
4. To promote legislation which will allow doctors to make privileged communications about Venereal Diseases.
5. To promote the provision of facilities for the treatment of expectant mothers who are infected.
6. To spread the knowledge that Free Treatment exists, and to impress upon the public the grave necessity for early treatment.

Will you help to stamp it out?

Delay is fraught with peril. Will you help to stamp out these diseases? Will you help to break the chain of infection by supporting the work of the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases?

It is impossible to estimate the number of lives you may save or the amount of

suffering you will obviate if you take your part in the work.

Funds are urgently needed. By giving your aid now you will be performing a service of incalculable value to the Nation and to suffering and innocent Humanity. We ask you to send a cheque to-day.

To the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases

President: Rt. Hon. Lord Sydenham.
Hon. Treasurer: Major Darwin.

Vice-President: The Bishop of Southwark.
General Secretary: Mrs. A. C. Gotto, O.B.E.

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Treasury Notes should be registered.

MOTOR NOTES.

To gas or not to gas, that is the question, whether it is better to put up with an unshapely protuberance above one's car or, claiming necessity and household use, to make inroads upon our diminished stock of petrol. True the gas bags are no longer in their experimental stage. Their look of playful amateurishness is gone. Each "D" shaped dome is neatly strapped into a containing tray and as it sinks it does not flop helplessly from side to side like an agitated blanc mange, but falls nobly and proudly like a dying gladiator, game to the last gasp of gas.

Gas bags have done and are doing good service in these petrolless days to keep private cars and other motor vehicles on the road.

Not only do they enable the private owner to economise in motor fuel, for gas costs about one-fourth only of the cost of petrol at its present price, but they also have enabled him to obtain supplies of the latter much valued commodity.

Licences for petrol have been granted to those who are otherwise eligible on condition that they adapt their cars for use with gas.

The Board of Trade is, however, reconsidering the position, being probably somewhat dumbfounded at the response the motor world has made to its appeal for the use of gas, and for the nonce no more permits are to be issued in England west of Westmoreland and Durham.

We are so accustomed to see some signal advantage bestowed upon Scotland and Ireland and withdrawn from the rest of the United Kingdom, that this fresh favouritism moves us not. Though why gas traction should be virtuous and patriotic at Loch Lomond or Kildare and nefarious in London, 'none knows or haply cares to know.' The oracular voice of Bureaucratic Authority speaks and we obey. It is really, how-

ever, a pity to discourage the use of gas just at this stage, because, like all new things upon which the wit and ingenuity of man begins to play—gas traction shows signs of interesting developments.

One obvious development lay in the direction of compression and this would have been followed up with enthusiasm were it not for the difficulty under war-time engineering conditions, of obtaining steel cylinders and other necessary appliances.

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Mr. A. G. Duncan, meritoriously desirous of sharing this good idea with the rest of the world, is engaged in an energetic campaign in favour of general standardization of motor parts. His idea is to aim at such a degree of co-operation among manufacturers as to ensure that the main units of every motor chassis of whatever make, shall be interchangeable. Such a condition would enormously curtail the time and labour spent upon repairs. Moreover, since the standardization demanded refers only to dimensional elements and not to design there is no suggestion of limiting individual enterprise or staying progressive development.

The British motor may still advance, but it will advance under conditions of commercial economy and thus maintain a better defensive front against the expected "big push" of foreign competition. That is what Mr. Duncan wants, and in spite of the natural jealousies of competitive forms, it looks as though he might get it. More power to his elbow.

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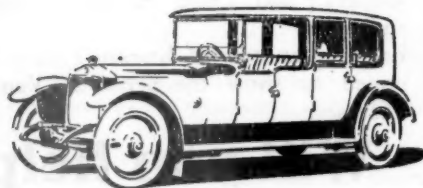
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THE CITY.

In times of national strain like the present the wisdom of the authorities in prohibiting open speculation during the war is emphasised. There is no more nervous individual in the City than the Stock Exchange jobber and by instinct or training he is usually a pessimist who in normal times makes money out of the innate, and frequently unwise, optimism of the general public. On many occasions during the war if there had been a large open speculative account the Stock Exchange would have suffered a severe slump; not necessarily because the news was inherently bad, but because the professional speculators (who include many jobbers) would have had a serious attack of nerves and by lowering prices might have infected the public. This week quotation have had a sagging tendency, partly owing to the constitutional trepidation of the jobbers. There has been no selling pressure, and, on the other hand, eager buyers have been conspicuously absent. Consequently most departments of the Stock Exchange have become stagnant. Shares of a speculative character, which had recently been advancing, naturally receded on any attempt to secure profits; but in some cases where investment quotations were marked down buyers actually found difficulty in executing orders owing to the scarcity of stock on offer. On the whole therefore it may be said that the week's experience in Throgmorton Street has served to express the healthy condition of markets and the confidence of the public.

The Treasury Committee on New Issues is extraordinarily inconsistent in its decisions. After having allowed a score of companies to increase their capital by solidifying their reserves and giving bonus shares to shareholders, it has refused to permit the directors of Courtauld, Limited, to indulge in that popular procedure. The ground for refusal is that it is "not in the public interest," a very broad excuse which may mean anything or nothing. Superficially it means that the public interest is liable to be injured by a company raising its nominal issued capital to a figure which corresponds with the actual amount of capital employed in the business—which is ridiculous. If a board publishes a balance sheet which wilfully misleads shareholders by an overvaluation of assets each director renders himself liable to prosecution. No penalty, however, is incurred by directors who deliberately undervalue the assets of their companies, although morally it is as wrong to mislead shareholders into selling shares below their true value as it is to trap them into buying at an exorbitant figure.

The directors of Courtaulds have revalued their American assets and have decided that the capital ought to be quintupled by making shareholders a present of two preference shares and two new ordinary shares in respect to every share now held. There is no doubt that they can provide conclusive evidence to prove the enhanced value of the assets; but the Treasury Committee, as if to maintain its reputation for inconsistency, after having kept remarkably steady for some weeks, now replies deliberately in the negative. So the Courtauld bonus scheme is postponed "for the duration."



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BRAKPAN MINES, LIMITED.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the FIFTEENTH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS in the above Company will be held in the Board Room, Second Floor, "The Corner House," Johannesburg, on Thursday, the 30th day of May, 1918, at 2.30 o'clock in the afternoon, for the following business:—

1. To receive the Reports of the Directors and Auditors, and to consider the Balance Sheet and Revenue and Expenditure Account for the year ended the 31st December, 1917.
2. To confirm the appointment of Mr. E. Oppenheimer as a Director in the place of Mr. J. H. Gratten, resigned. To elect two Directors in the place of Mr. C. Marx and Mr. E. J. Renaud, who retire by rotation in terms of the Articles of Association, but are eligible and offer themselves for re-election.
3. To fix the remuneration for the past audit, and to appoint Auditors for the ensuing year.
4. To transact such other business as may be transacted at an Ordinary General Meeting.

The London Transfer Registers of the Company will be closed from the 23rd April to the 27th April, 1918, and the Head Office Transfer Registers from the 27th May to the 13th June, 1918, all days inclusive.

Holders of Share Warrants to Bearer desirous of attending in person or by proxy, or of voting at any General Meeting of the Company, shall produce their Share Warrants for verification, or may, at their option, deposit same as follows:—

- (a) At the Head Office of the Company, in Johannesburg, at least 24 hours before the time appointed for the holding of the Meeting.
- (b) At the London Office of the Company, 5, London Wall Buildings, E.C.2, at least 30 days before the date appointed for the holding of the Meeting.
- (c) At the Office of the Crédit Mobilier Français, 30 and 32, Rue Taitbout, Paris, at least 30 days before the date appointed for the holding of the meeting.

Upon such production or deposit, Certificates with Proxy Forms will be issued, under which such Share-Warrant Holders may attend the Meeting either in person or by proxy.

Dated Johannesburg, 19th February, 1918.

By Order,

J. H. JEFFERYS,
Secretary to the London Committee.

London Transfer Office,
5, London Wall Buildings,
Finsbury Circus, E.C.2.
28th March, 1918.

SPRING MINES, LIMITED.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the NINTH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS in the above Company will be held in the Board Room, Second Floor, "The Corner House," Johannesburg, on Thursday, the 30th day of May, 1918, at 11.15 o'clock in the forenoon, for the following business:—

1. To receive the Reports of the Directors and Auditors, and to consider the Balance Sheet and Revenue and Expenditure Account for the period ended 31st December, 1917.
2. To confirm the appointment of Mr. E. Oppenheimer and Mr. W. L. Honnold as directors in the place of Mr. S. B. Joel and Mr. W. H. Dawe. To elect two Directors in the place of Mr. W. S. Saunders and Mr. C. Marx, who retire by rotation in terms of the Articles of Association, but are eligible and offer themselves for re-election.
3. To fix the remuneration for the past audit, and to appoint Auditors for the ensuing year.
4. To transact such other business as may be transacted at an Ordinary General Meeting.

The London Transfer Registers of the Company will be closed from the 23rd April to 27th April, 1918, and the Head Office Transfer Registers from the 27th May to the 13th June, 1918, all days inclusive.

Holders of Share Warrants to Bearer desirous of attending in person or by proxy, or of voting at any General Meeting of the Company, shall produce their Share Warrants for verification, or may, at their option, deposit same as follows:—

- (a) At the Head Office of the Company in Johannesburg at least twenty-four hours before the time appointed for the holding of the Meeting; or
- (b) At the London Office of the Company, 5, London Wall Buildings, E.C.2, at least thirty days before the date appointed for the holding of the Meeting.

Upon such production or deposit, Certificates with Proxy Forms will be issued, under which such Share-Warrant Holders may attend the Meeting either in person or by proxy.

Dated Johannesburg, 19th February, 1918.

By Order,

J. H. JEFFERYS,
Secretary to the London Committee.

London Transfer Office,
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